

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 6-21 and 23-24 are presently active in this case. The present Amendment amends Claim 21 and cancels Claims 22 and 25-27.

Claims 25-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hambling (U.S. Patent No. 2,949,731) in view of Wapler (U.S. Patent No. 3,274,757).

Claims 21, 23 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hambling in view of Teague, Jr. et al. (U.S. Patent No. 2,939,017).

Claims 1-3 and 6-20 were allowed and Claim 22 was indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter. In response, Claim 22 is rewritten in independent form as amended Claim 21.

In response to the rejections of Claims 21 and 25-27, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections. However, in the spirit of moving prosecution forward for the present application, Claim 21 is amended to incorporate the features of allowable Claim 22 and Claims 25-27 are canceled so that the rejections are now moot.

The present amendment is submitted in accordance with the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.116, which after Final Rejection permits entry of amendments canceling rejected claims or complying with requirements of form set forth in a previous Office Action. As the present amendment merely cancels rejected Claims 25-27 and rewrites allowable Claim 22 in independent form as amended Claim 21 as suggested in the previous Office Action, it is respectfully requested that the present amendment be entered.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in

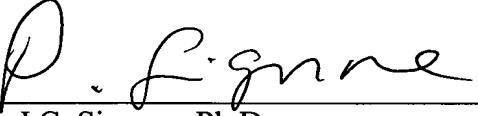
Application No. 10/617,656  
Reply to Office Action of September 7, 2005

condition for formal Allowance. A Notice of Allowance for Claims 1-3, 6-21 and 23-24 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,  
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.

  
Philippe J.C. Signore, Ph.D.  
Attorney of Record  
Registration No. 43,922

Customer Number  
**22850**

Tel: (703) 413-3000  
Fax: (703) 413 -2220  
(OSMMN 06/04)